

Turkey between the Balkans and the Caucasus in the Post-Cold War Era: ‘Insulator’¹ or Player State?

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ÖZET 1990 sonrasında bölgeselleşme yeni bir eğilim olarak ortaya çıktığında, Türkiye’nin Balkanlar ve Kafkaslarla eskiye dayanan ilişkileri değişik bir bağlamda gelişmeye başlamıştır. Türkiye’nin, Batı’nın bir parçası olarak, yaklaşık elli yıl uluslararası sistemin iki kutuplu yapısı nedeniyle iki bölge arasında rolünü yalıtıcı olarak yerine getirmiş olması karşısında, şimdi bu bölgelere yönelik yeni ilgisi, birtakım ortak özelliklerle şekillenmiş motivasyonları beraberinde getirmiştir. Bu ortak özellikler, Türkiye’nin eski yalıtıcı rolünün “player” rolüne çevrilmesinde işlevsel olmuştur. Bu ortak özellikler, Türkiye’nin ABD ile ittifakına, bölgelerin Avro – Atlantik yapılarına entegrasyon çabalarına, Türkiye’nin bu bölgelerle olan ortak geçmişine ve daha ziyade yeni bir işbirliği alanı olan enerjiye dayanmakla birlikte, bunlarla sınırlı değildir. Geçmişe bakıldığında, her iki bölgedeki paralel dağılma süreçleri, Türkiye’nin “player” olarak yeni Soğuk Savaş sonrası rolünü test eden iki sınav olmuştur; ileriye yönelik beklentiler ise Türkiye’nin bu yeni rolünden geriye dönüş olmayacağı ipuçlarını vermektedir.

ANAHTAR KELİMELER Türkiye, Balkanlar, Kafkaslar, dış politika, ABD, bölgeselleşme

ABSTRACT As regionalization became a new trend after 1990, Turkey’s longstanding relations with the Balkans and the Caucasus unfolded in an altered context. While Turkey had fulfilled its role mostly as an insulator between the two regions due to the polarized structure of the international system for nearly fifty years as part of the Western camp, renewed Turkish interest towards both regions carried with it motivations shaped by certain commonalities. In turn, these commonalities were functional in transforming Turkey’s previous role from an insulator state into a player in these regions. These rested on, but were not limited to, Turkey’s alliance with the US, both regions’ efforts of Euro – Atlantic integration, Turkey’s common past with the two regions, and the rather new cooperation area of energy. In retrospect, parallel disintegration processes in both regions were two test cases for Turkey’s new post-Cold War position as a player and future prospects give hints that Turkey’s new role is not likely to be reversed.

KEYWORDS Turkey, Balkans, Caucasus, foreign policy, US, regionalization

INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War has been the Achilles’ heel as a timeline for relevant efforts of explaining and understanding world politics since 1990. Any scholarly work to elucidate a given topic in international relations literature will figure the term several times in an effort to make out its own case. Depicting the theme of regionalism, this study is not an exception, by seeking to find out how regionalism as a post-Cold War issue

1. The term is used in the sense embraced by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, throughout their book entitled *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

boiled down to affect Turkey's relations with its immediate eastern and western neighborhood after 1990. As one theme characterizing the nature of the post-Cold War system, regionalism—and its effects—was not peculiar to Turkey at that time; yet its consequences were, given the special geo-strategic location of Turkey in juxtaposition with accustomed hot spots.

In retrospect, all countries in these regions which had once been under Turkey's influence for quite some time became communist (except for Greece) when the Cold War set in. The term that would describe the nature of Turkey's relations with the Balkan and Caucasian states during the Cold War is perhaps 'limitation' at best and 'suspension' at worst, while 'avoidance' would be too banal a word to accept in scholarly terms. Against this backdrop came a revival of Turkish interest, coinciding with an unabated regionalization trend after 1990. Turkey's responses to concurrent disintegration processes in the Balkans and Caucasus inevitably made it the main regional actor, which seemed to obviate its previous role as insulator, tasked with warding off the imminent Soviet threat. As time progressed, the political reservoir shaping Turkey's regional relations were marked with a new Turkish-US cooperation towards both regions, explicit Turkish support for both regions' EU and NATO bids, a more pronounced but balanced reference to the common past with these regions, and a not less important issue: energy deals. Accordingly, this study posits that all of the four elements in Turkey's political tool kit concerning both regions have worked effectively to upgrade Turkey's role in these regions to become a player and intensified since the past twenty years. In such a framework, this study shall unfold in subsections that conceptually examine the new trend of regionalism, to be followed by new activism in Turkish foreign policy after 1990, policy contours towards the Balkans and Caucasus, and the mentioned policy elements in the order above. The final analysis is that although these policy lines pointed to the existence of both opportunities and risks for Turkey after 1990, the former have so far outweighed the latter, offering manifest evidence that the course is likely to remain.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: REGIONALISM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The end of the bipolar system unfolded a new configuration of international politics after 1990, which shaped the interactions between states in the ensuing years in different ways. One form these interactions came along with was the rivalries and cooperation attempts that have been motivated largely at regional levels after the Cold

War, hence the need to analyze this tendency in the new multipolar international system. The post-Cold War system was based on regions where nationalist struggles and rivalries were observed.² In fact, covering political, economic, military issues, among others, this distinctive trend in post-Cold War international politics also existed before its more articulated recent revival. Thinking security-wise, the modern history of regionalism displayed three stages dating back to the Sixteenth Century: the 1500-1945 period, the 1945-1989 period, and the post-Cold War period.³ In the relatively long period between 1500 and 1945, the European state system expanded towards becoming global. The European great powers saw the entire world as their region for expansion. The key feature of the period 1945-1990 was the Cold War and decolonization during which many new states emerged on the world political stage as new actors, all aspiring to assume their individual role in international politics. The last period which has been unfolding since 1990 has eliminated the superpower domination over regions in the world and brought along a variety of non-security issues in international politics.⁴ The last period marked by multipolarity has proved capable of providing more opportunity to states in a given region to conduct their relations at the regional level.⁵ With the disappearance of the superpower domination, states became increasingly involved in regional politics, economic and military issues, which in turn produced debates to understand the regions in terms of not only regional security but also regional integration in a range of fields such as economy, energy, and society, etc.⁶

Central to such regional politics theme has been the motivation of integration. Although there is no widely-accepted single definition of integration, it is commonplace to argue that it

“refers to a process in which units move from a condition of total or partial isolation towards a complete or partial unification. Applied to ... independent sovereign states, the concept refers to a

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2. Louis J. Cantori, “Regional Solutions to Regional Security Problems: The Middle East and East Somalia,” *Middle East Policy*, 3/3 (October 1994), pp. 20-30.
 3. Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, p.14.
 4. For detailed information see, Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, pp.15-20.
 5. Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, second edition (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1991), p.208, cited in Stephen C. Calleya (ed.), *Regionalism in the Post-Cold War World* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), pp.xiii-xiv. For other arguments on the re-emergence of regional politics, see Stephen C. Calleya (ed.), *Regionalism in the Post-Cold War World*.
 6. For a relevant and comprehensive argument, see Iver B. Neumann, *Regions in International Relations Theory: The Case for a Region-Building Approach* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Research Report No.162, [1992]).

process of complex social transformations, which may or may not imply some kind of permanent institutional structure or mutual cooperation.”⁷

With a view to ensuring such integration, states have been increasingly responding to the impulse of regional politics since the end of the Cold War. Accounts of the integration process often argue that the process is irreversible at least in the short- and medium-term, and this study is no exception to this proposition.⁸ Once exclusively European phenomena, regional politics and integration have now spread to other places where they proved influential in the post-Cold War era.

Amidst this new trend after 1990 was Turkey at the intersection of its two immediate neighboring regions—the Balkans and the Caucasus. As part of its pressing foreign policy agenda in the wake of the end of bipolar system, policies towards these two regions posed Turkey both direct challenges and opportunities for integration. Ankara found itself in a position to redefine its policies towards these sub-systems with a renewed interest and active foreign policy-making, with mixed results. While Turkey was engaged in efforts of finding ways to build closer relations and cooperation with the states of both regions, it would face both cooperative and conflictual dynamics, directed against it in the two regions, which were at play simultaneously. This regional policy resurgence would coincide with active foreign policy making in the early 1990’s.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE EARLY 1990’S: ACTIVISM

The early 1990’s was marked by a relatively new concept for Turkish foreign policy making. The term ‘active foreign policy’ was a concept introduced by former President Turgut Özal with reference to explaining the policy pursued during the First Gulf War (1990-1991). It was articulated more concretely in former Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz’s government program in July 1991 read in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, which stated that Turkish foreign policy would pursue an active path thereafter.⁹ A brief descriptive account of foreign policy restructuring in the first half of the 1990’s is in order here,

7. Ramesh Thakur and Luk van Langenhove, “Enhancing Global Governance through Regional Integration,” in Andrew F. Cooper, Christopher W. Hughes and Philippe de Lombaerde (eds.), *Regionalisation and Global Governance: the Taming of Globalisation?* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), p.27.

8. Louise Fawcett, “Regionalism from an Historical Perspective,” in Mary Farrell, Björn Hettne, and Luk van Langenhove (eds.) *Global Politics of Regionalism: Theory and Practice*, (London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2005), p.29.

9. Murat Yetkin, *Ateş Hattında Aktif Politika: Balkanlar, Kafkaslar ve Orta Doğu Üçgeninde Türkiye* (İstanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1992), p.240.

because in face of developments in the Balkans, Caucasus and elsewhere, Turkey had already begun to restructure its foreign policy from being “the tail end of Europe into the center of its own newly emerging world” in Fuller’s description of the state of affairs.¹⁰

There was a widely-accepted view that this was an abandonment of Turkey’s traditional policy of non-involvement in regional conflicts in the new post-Cold War conjuncture.¹¹ This entailed that Turkey’s response to the new post-Cold War situation was to pursue a more active role in the regions surrounding its borders—the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East.¹²

As the mastermind of this strategy, Özal, prime minister from 1983 to 1991 and then president until his death on 17 April 1993, played a central role both in the formulation and the execution of this strategy. At the core of this strategy was the belief that Turkey could continue to be a valued ally of the Western structures only by augmenting its regional role and influence.¹³ It is argued that both during his prime ministry and presidency, Özal acted with a mission to make Turkey one of the ten or fifteen most developed countries in the world and chose to act individually regarding foreign policy issues.¹⁴ He is known to have expressed his views on sensitive foreign policy issues and critical problems without even consulting the Ministry for Foreign Affairs at times and he justified this attitude by emphasizing that he was responsible for the security of the country as President and Head of the National Security Council.¹⁵ The Özal Administration signed more international agreements than any other administration until then in Turkish political history.¹⁶

THE BALKANS

After Cold War period during which Turkey mostly regarded the region of secondary importance, Turkish policy was now in flux with renewed interest in the Balkans.¹⁷

10. Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey Faces East: New Orientations toward the Middle East and the Old Soviet Union* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1997), p.ix, cited in Muhittin Ataman, “Leadership Change: Özal Leadership and Restructuring in Turkish Foreign Policy,” *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 1/1 (Spring 2002), p.147.

11. I. P. Khosla, “Turkey: The Search for a Role,” *Strategic Analysis*, 25/3 (June 2001), pp.343-369.

12. Sabri Sayarı, “Turkey and the Middle East in the 1990s,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 26/3 (Spring 1997), p.45.

13. Sabri Sayarı, “Turkey and the Middle East in the 1990s,” p.45.

14. Metin Heper and Menderes Çınar, “Parliamentary Government with a Strong President: The Post-1989 Turkish Experience,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 111/3 (Autumn 1996), p.493.

15. Metin Heper and Menderes Çınar, “Parliamentary Government with a Strong President,” p.495.

16. Muhittin Ataman, “Leadership Change,” p.132.

17. F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2003), pp.6-7.

Özal's official visits to Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania and Croatia in 1993 were seen as an "[h]istorical step toward overtly expressing friendship with Muslims while containing aspirations of Yugoslavia and Greece." It has also been maintained that the alleged Ottomanist/ Islamist approach towards the region was seen by the supporters of this approach as a policy of balancing against the 'Orthodox Christian/Slavic' bloc in the Balkans.¹⁸ The project that materialized within the framework of active foreign policy towards the region was the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) launched by Özal in 1992. The reciprocation of the states invited to join the BSEC was to be coupled with the acknowledgment by the former Soviet republics that Turkey was their gateway to the West. It seemed that the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East framework that Özal had in mind was well under way.¹⁹

THE CAUCASUS

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the southern Soviet space suddenly became a platform for new states that had cultural and linguistic ties with Turkey. As Özal's motivation manifested a combination of emotion, optimism and enthusiasm towards the region, Turkey became the first state to recognize these newly emerged states. Perhaps among Özal's various foreign policy initiatives in the new conjuncture, his policies towards the Caucasian (and Central Asian) states were the most radical move from traditional foreign policy making in Turkey, given the memory of the failed attempts of Enver Paşa to unite the Turkic peoples during the last years of the Ottoman Empire. Enver Paşa's failed attempts had convinced Mustafa Kemal Atatürk that pan-Turkism would be both adventurism and dangerous for Turkey. Central to such policy was prudence against antagonizing the Soviet Union. As Özal showed a renewed interest to the region, the possibility of antagonizing a recently disintegrated Russia would come through.²⁰

By and large, the concept of 'active foreign policy' was not welcome by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs so much as to prompt one senior career diplomat to state that the term should be gotten rid of. It was not well-received by the military officials

18. Muhittin Ataman, "Leadership Change," p.140.

19. Murat Yetkin, *Ateş Hattında Aktif Politika*, p.253.

20. Laurent Ruseckas, "Turkey and Eurasia: Opportunities and Risks in the Caspian Pipeline Derby," *Journal of International Affairs*, 54/1 (Fall 2000), pp.219-220. By 1992, a summit meeting was held by Özal in İstanbul with the conglomeration of the new states. Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (Türk İşbirliği ve Kalkınma İdaresi Başkanlığı [TİKA]) was set up, together with new satellite links as well as air routes.

alike but the ensuing years until mid-1990's proved that it was to be adopted. Having found expression in Mesut Yılmaz's government program, it would be retained in the Demirel-İnönü coalition government program—though not with the same intensity.²¹ Afterwards, Turkey would balance this activism with self-restraint in view of foreign reactions and fears that Ankara might be tempted to play a more assertive role in these two regions.²² Turkey began to shape its policy contours towards both regions concurrently.

TURKEY AND THE BALKANS: POLICY CONTOURS

Considered as a sub-complex within the larger European security complex, the Balkans has been a region that was divided by many significant divisions in history, some of which include the Greek cultural sphere boundary, the border between East and West Roman Empires, the boundary between Orthodox and Catholic Christendom, and the boundary between the Turkish and European worlds.²³ Reference to the Ottoman legacy on the region is commonplace and this legacy has been influential in the formation of the later constellations in the region.

Following the proclamation of the Republic, Turkey made efforts to improve relations with the West. During the interwar period, it was neutral. Throughout the Cold War, it acted as a staunch ally of the West. However, with respect to its relations with the Balkans and the Caucasus, it was more passive due to being in opposite ideological camps with the states of these regions. As such, it was located as an insulator state between the two regions. This “insulator position was ... an attempt to avoid being drawn into conflicts on all sides.”²⁴

Nevertheless, after the Cold War, one of the two important regions where Turkey was involved would be the Balkans. As former Yugoslavia began to dismantle in June 1991, the issues that made Turkey an indispensable actor in the Balkans came through with an amalgam of factors: (1) Turkey was a Balkan country in geographical, historical and cultural terms; (2) the region was a strategic trade link between Turkey and Western

21. Murat Yetkin, *Ateş Hattında Aktif Politika*, p.257.

22. F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty*, p.7.

23. Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, pp.379-380. For a compact account on the definition of a 'regional security complex' and 'sub-complex,' see Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, p.378.

24. Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, pp.392-393.

Europe; and (3) a considerable Balkan *émigré* population existed in Turkey, and Turks in the Balkans,²⁵ therefore, a stable and peaceful Balkans was a vital area for Turkey.²⁶

However, there was more to the story when viewed through a broader lens. Other components that have come to shape Turkey's policies towards the region were first and foremost, the disintegration of the Soviet Union that served to make the United States a more preponderant actor in world politics, which involved intervention in crises and conflicts including the Balkans after 1991. Second, and related with the first, close relations between Turkey and the United States was reflected also on the Balkans since both countries had common orientations concerning the region. Third, and equally important, was Greece's policies with respect to the Balkans. The problems troubling the relations between Turkey and Greece have become almost constant and Greece's policies centered on backing a Greek-Serbian alliance in the 1990's appeared as yet another dimension of the inherent set of bilateral problems which Turkey faced.²⁷

Upon such background, Turkish policy was now in flux with a challenge of its former Cold War role as insulator *vis-à-vis* the region. Throughout the conflict-ridden 1990's, Turkey displayed a quite harmonious management with the United States and it was careful and cooperative. This was enough reason to foresee that it would not remain as an insulator state, but a regional player also in its eastern neighborhood which emerged as yet another locus of tension and conflict to handle.²⁸

TURKEY AND THE CAUCASUS: POLICY CONTOURS

The Caucasus also coheres as a security sub-complex, including two parts: North and South Caucasus.²⁹ Just as the Balkans, the emergence of independent states in the Caucasus ushered a new security and stability search in which Turkey was involved

25. Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, "Turkish Security in the Shifting Balkans: Reorientation to a Regional Focus," in Kosta Tsipis (ed), *Common Security Regimes in the Balkans* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p.99.

26. Baskın Oran, "Türkiye'nin Balkan ve Kafkas Politikası," *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 50/1-2 (January-June 1995), p.274.

27. For a more detailed account on the factors in this paragraph, see Osman Metin Öztürk, "Türk Dış Politikasında Balkanlar," in Ömer E. Lütem and Birgül Demirtaş-Coşkun (eds.), *Balkan Diplomasisi* (Ankara: Avrasya Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi Yayınları, 2001), pp.22-27. See also Baskın Oran, "Türkiye'nin Balkan ve Kafkas Politikası," pp.271-274; and Çevik Bir, "Turkey's Role in the New World Order: New Challenges," *Strategic Forum*, No. 135 (February 1998).

28. Buzan and Wæver have a counter argument. For details, see Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, pp.394-395.

29. Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, p.419.

along with other regional states. Central to Turkey's approach towards the region was a three-fold policy after 1991: (1) the region was of importance due to being a gateway to Central Asian states; (2) Turkey had various ties with the peoples of this region; and (3) there is a considerable number of Caucasian *émigré* population in Turkey, who are influential on Turkey's Caucasus policies.³⁰ In such a framework, Turkey's efforts were shaped by a motivation to spread the "Turkish model of government and society—consisting of parliamentary democracy, relatively free-market economy and secularism in Muslim society—to take advantage of the mutual development opportunities and cooperation can create."³¹ More importantly, Turkey's prospective links with the region were to be based on the burgeoning energy cooperation with a view to securing importation of oil and natural gas needed for the Turkish industrial sector and domestic use.

In contrast to the critical arguments in the second half of the 1990's that Turkey's political and economic resources concerning the region were of a limited nature and remained unfulfilled, Turkey's current position with regard to its energy contracts says otherwise.³² The argument can be taken even further to maintain that perhaps of all three immediate regions that Turkey borders, the Caucasus has proved to be the most conducive for solidifying Turkey's economic prospects with comprehensive oil and natural gas agreements. Accordingly, Turkey supported the territorial integrity and independence of the regional states and acted in concert with the West in its policy formulations towards the region since the 1990's, which the following section seeks to elucidate.

TURKEY BETWEEN THE BALKANS AND CAUCASUS: PARALLELISMS, CHALLENGES, PERSPECTIVES

It goes without saying that it is worthwhile to pair these two regions, as we are doing now, with a view to inquiring whether parallel political and economic processes in the two regions gave way to parallel policy responses by Turkey in the post-Cold War era as well as ascertaining whether these policies were continuous or disruptions became

30. Mitat Çelikkpala, "Turkey and the Caucasus: A Regional 'Giant' or a Neglected Actor?" in Cengiz Çağla (ed), *The Caucasian Challenge: Interests, Conflicts, Identities* (Istanbul: Bigart Ltd., 2008), pp.46-47.

31. Bülent Aras, *The New Geopolitics of Eurasia and Turkey's Position* [with a foreword by Barry Rubin] (London and Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), p.7.

32. For one such argument, see for instance, Freddy de Pauw, "Turkey's Policies in Transcaucasia," in Bruno Coppieters (ed), *Contested Borders in the Caucasus* (Brussels: Vrije Universiteit Brussels Press, 1996), pp.179-191.

possible since the 1990's. Within the framework of the policy contours towards the two regions, several themes stand out as distinctive topics which deserve mention as they had their imprint on Turkey's policy towards the region. Though not exhaustive, they include alliance with the United States, integration efforts, common history and energy deals. Subsequently, Turkey's policy options towards both regions would revolve around the opportunities and limitations posed by these factors—but not limited to them—with varying outcomes.

Viewed through a broad perspective, Turkey's policy preferences were observed to be in line with those of the United States regarding the Balkans both during and after the twin crises of Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-1995) and Kosovo (1999). Both Turkey and the United States supported the territorial integrity of former Yugoslavia in the initial phases of the conflict. However, it soon became impossible to sustain this attitude in face of the irreversible disintegration process and increasing Serbian atrocities. Thereafter, both Turkish and United States policy priorities pointed to a three-fold objective: to bring an end to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina to preserve its independence; to prevent the spillover effect of war in Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia, Sandjak and Vojvodina; and to draw international attention to the crisis. One epitome of this alliance was the compromise between the Bosniaks and Croats to establish the Croat-Muslim Federation in 1994, which materialized thanks to Turkish efforts, backed by the United States.

The post-1995 policies of Turkey and the United States also converged on Balkan issues in overall terms. Since then, the post-war structuring of Bosnia-Herzegovina has been following a process endorsed by both Turkey and the United States. The most recent visit by the American Vice President Joe Biden to Bosnia-Herzegovina was a confirmation of the continuing American commitment to help the country to erase its wartime problems and strengthen its institutions. Turkey attaches no less importance than the United States to the fact that the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina should put aside the divisive rhetoric and actions that threaten the viability of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Similarly, both countries' policies converge on the prospect that the future of the country is in the European Union.³³ Currently, the United States backs the completion of the reforms which are also known as the "five plus two" package, before the Office of the High Representative can be transformed into a Special Representative of the European

33. "Strengthening the Transatlantic Alliance: An Overview of the Obama Administration's Policies in Europe," *Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Europe of the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, House of Representatives, 111th Congress, First Session, 16 June 2009, Serial no. 111-20 (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 2009), <http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov>, p.15.

Union. Turkey is also supportive of the continued existence of the Office of the High Representative and the tenacious observation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

On the other hand, when Slobodan Milosevic's dormant designs on Kosovo surfaced by 1998, Turkey faced a double-pronged task which was quite daunting. It not only had to ward off arguments claiming a similarity between the situations in Kosovo and Turkey's south-east in its domestic politics but also had to seek ways of being part of the efforts to overcome the crisis in the international arena. It participated in the decision-making process and contributed with its own military to the NATO intervention in 1999. Throughout this period, it was not alone. Just as the independence of Bosnia, that of Kosovo within its current borders, with a sufficient level of governing capacity, sound economy and investment environment was the outstanding issue in view of both Turkish and United States policies. How to accommodate the Serb factor against this, of course, was yet another common concern for both Turkey and the United States. By and large, the overall objective of seeing the other regional states as part of Euro-Atlantic structures is the common long-term policy of both Turkey and the United States.

The cooperative picture in Turkish-American policies is epitomized in the other region of immediate concern for Turkey; the Caucasus. From the Turkish perspective, its ally the United States was seen capable of playing an influential role in the Caucasus and to act as a counterweight against Russia while Turkey wanted to become an active player in the region. Accordingly, the key question that emerged during the complex situation in the early 1990's was whether the effectiveness of American efforts would succeed in keeping the fervent nationalistic rhetoric within limits in Russia or not, whilst promoting Turkey's ambitions concerning the area.³⁴ Indeed, excluding Russia, Turkey proved to be the single outsider state that was most actively engaged in the region. Meanwhile, both the European Union and the United States kept their distance temporarily. However, by 1997, even if energy was not necessarily the endgame of the American policy it would prove to be the means as the United States began to consider new pipelines as the key to assert its position in the region. In more specific terms, "[e]ast-west pipelines linking Caspian oil and gas to Turkish ports and markets were seen as a way to support Turkish ambitions while also blocking Iranian influence and preventing Russia from re-asserting hegemony over the region."³⁵ Although otherwise expressed in the official American rhetoric, oil and gas themselves have not been the principal motivation behind the

34. Bülent Aras, *The New Geopolitics of Eurasia and Turkey's Position*, p.20.

35. Laurent Ruseckas, "Turkey and Eurasia: Opportunities and Risks in the Caspian Pipeline Derby," p.225.

American policy towards the Caucasus, and the more viable motivation was the pursuit of power, prestige and influence.³⁶ Either way, Turkey and the United States thus found themselves in another field to cooperate as partners in the context of largely shared interests. The emergence of this cooperative sentiment came through when Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline project became operative in 2006, which offers enough reason for expecting more from the ongoing Nabucco process towards bolstering Turkey's position in the region in the years to come.

On the other hand, the level of Turkish-American alliance could be emboldened if Section 907 of the 1992 Freedom Support Act in the United States is annulled. This Section prohibits American aid to Azerbaijan—a result of the influence of the Armenian lobbying activities in the United States at that time. By 2001, it was amended to include a statement that the American president may waive this provision if the national interests of the United States require so. The annulment of this provision would serve for better Azerbaijan-American relations and consolidate Turkey's hand as the main American ally in the region.³⁷

One factor that amplified this promising nature of Turkish-American alliance in the region was the revival of radical movements and terrorism, threatening the regional states. As this brought the possibility of failed states in the region, the portrayal of Turkey by the United States and the West as a model for these states was increasingly pronounced. More references to Turkey as a prospective model with its democratic and secular system, strong military, and market economy were recorded as key elements of the American parlance towards the region.³⁸ Needless to say, one of the ways the future course of this optimism will take is the way the United States shapes its policies regarding the Armenian allegations of the 1915 events. To what extent it would be determinant on the Turkish-American partnership in the region is yet another issue that deserves examination in its own right.

EURO-ATLANTIC ALLIANCE

In contrast to the early 1990's when the European Union did not pose an influential actor picture regarding the Balkans, today it seems to have consolidated its position

36. Laurent Ruseckas, "Turkey and Eurasia: Opportunities and Risks in the Caspian Pipeline Derby," p.225. For another comprehensive argument of Turkish interests in the region, see Bülent Aras, "Turkey's Policy in the Former Soviet South: Assets and Options," *Turkish Studies*, 1/1 (Spring 2000), pp.36-58.

37. Bülent Aras, *The New Geopolitics of Eurasia and Turkey's Position*, pp.21-22.

38. Mitat Çelikpala, "Turkey and the Caucasus: A Regional 'Giant' or a Neglected Actor?" p.49.

as a viable external actor. In the absence of European Union efforts, the United States intervened in the war in Bosnia. In the twin crisis in Kosovo by 1999, the European Union policies did not prove to be effective, either. However, it would be the Kosovo war that prompted the European Union to come up with a relatively clear-headed and proactive attitude towards the Balkans after 1999. It subsequently developed a civilian and military operational capacity which was brought to pass in 2003 when it took over the police operation in Bosnia from the United Nations, to be followed by taking over the mission from NATO in Macedonia the same year. As the European Union took further steps for stabilization of the region, it sent a force to replace the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in NATO.³⁹

The real significant move by the European Union came along with the Stabilization and Accession Process (SAP) which foresees a prospective membership for regional states. Covering trade and assistance issues in particular, it was embraced at the June 2003 European Union-Balkans Thessaloniki Summit. Meanwhile, as the risk of full-scale conflict has been eliminated today, the need to shift the focus more on organized crime issues became obvious. In line with such an understanding, the European Union's Balkan policy is replete with the fight against organized crime today. Time has come to expect more consolidating moves from the European Union in face of the experience of the past fifteen years. Given that the United States is more submerged in its priorities in the Middle East and Central Asia, it would not be a realistic approach to expect it to be a leading actor in the region, although it is likely to continue as an influential actor.⁴⁰ This means more will have to be done by the European Union in the Balkans.

How does Turkey fit in this European Union-Balkan cooperative picture? Turkey has repeatedly expressed its inclination to see the region integrated to the larger European Union structure. Ankara acknowledges that a secure Balkans can be a source of stability for the region. What kind of favorable outcomes would this bring for Turkey? First of all, a stable Balkans would provide facilitated trade ties for Turkey, of course, provided that European Union visa regimes are arranged in a way not to work against Turkish businessmen and investors. Second, Turkey can act as an influential actor in improving the links between the Balkans and the European Union as a state that shared a common history with the region. Third, increased Turkish participation in the civil rehabilitation of the region would have a positive effect in its overall position in the eyes of the regional

39. Fraser Cameron, "The European Union's Role in the Balkans," in Brad K. Blitz (ed.), *War and Change in the Balkans: Nationalism, Conflict and Cooperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.100-102.

40. Fraser Cameron, "The European Union's Role in the Balkans", pp.107-108.

states. Last, but not least, Turkey can offer its European Union experience to the regional states concerning their European Union bids.

The security aspect of the Balkan story inevitably brings forth NATO's involvement in the region. While the European Union was involved more with post-war rehabilitation efforts in the region, it was NATO that was directly faced with the challenging task of restoring peace both during and after the war, having engaged itself in hot war. Whether the premise in doing so was that NATO had to intervene to ensure the future dominance of the United States in regional affairs—particularly to ensure NATO enlargement in the region⁴¹—or that Serbian violence had to be stopped at all costs, the final analysis pointed to the same proposition: Bosnia and later Kosovo were two test cases for NATO to prove its viability in face of the security challenges in this sub-complex of larger Europe. It is commonplace to argue that the intervention in Bosnia was too little and too late while the intervention in Kosovo was better-worked, too much and too soon. On any account, the current security picture has been made possible by these two interventions. And Turkey's role in both episodes was far from being marginal. From the beginning to the end of the conflict in Bosnia and Kosovo, Turkey acted in joint harmonious management within NATO, which was followed by its civilian efforts as part of the Alliance policies. Accordingly, Turkey has been, *inter alia*, training Balkan military personnel, offering them language courses, participating with them in joint exercises, and contributing to Train and Equip Program. Turkey wants to see more regional states become full members of NATO as a NATO member state and as part of its individual Balkan policies.

If Turkey's role as member of NATO was noteworthy concerning the Balkans, its same role *vis-à-vis* the Caucasus did not have less important implications for Ankara. The only member of NATO that has the most cognizance of the Caucasus is Turkey and no other member in NATO has more strategic interest or historical ties with the region than Turkey. On the other hand, Turkey is the only NATO member that shares a common border with all the Transcaucasian states. In view of the fact that it has the second largest army within NATO, it was seen as a future influential NATO member in respect to integrating the regional states to the NATO structure.⁴²

41. See Sean Gervasi, "Why is NATO in Yugoslavia?" in Ramsey Clark (ed.), *NATO in The Balkans: Voices of Opposition* (New York: International Action Center, 1998), pp.22-23, for a critical account of NATO's involvement in the former Yugoslavia. The rest of the edited volume also qualifies as a collection of critical views on NATO's involvement in the Balkan wars after the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

42. Glen E. Howard, "NATO and the Caucasus: The Caspian Axis," in Stephen J. Blank (ed.), *NATO After Enlargement: New Challenges, New Missions, New Forces* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1998), p.170.

The three states in the South Caucasus are associate members of NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC). They signed the Framework Document of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) in 1994. As part of the PfP, Georgia and Azerbaijan sent contingents to Kosovo in 1999 and Armenia also sent a platoon as part the Greek contingent. The three states also signed the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO.⁴³ However, the aspiration to become members of NATO is not a uniform one on the part of these three states. While Azerbaijan and Georgia want to become members of NATO, Armenia does not harbor such an intention, although it does not reject a certain level of cooperation.⁴⁴

As two key members of NATO, Turkey and the United States are cognizant of the deep strategic importance of the Caucasus and are supportive of the ongoing integration process in the region. Their common interests are based on oil development in the region and securing oil transport to the West. Aside from the oil development, both states were also concerned about proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in the region since a sizeable portion of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal is located throughout the Caspian which include nuclear facilities and uranium processing plants in the Caucasus and the Caspian region.⁴⁵

Motivated by these overall interests, but primarily by the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline, Turkey has actively participated in the efforts to integrate the regional states to NATO command structure by streamlining of the command structure and the introduction of the Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF) concept, with the latter being demonstrated in peacekeeping exercises in 1997. Subsequently, Turkey signed numerous bilateral military agreements with the newly independent states. It also took a leading role in promoting the PfP program. Due to the fact that Turkey already had an established military attaché network in the Caspian region, Turkey was regarded as a suitable state for starting and running the PfP programs, although the size of American military attachés to the region increased gradually later on.⁴⁶ As part of the PfP, significant numbers

43. Martin Malek, "The South Caucasus at the Crossroads: Ethno-territorial Conflicts, Russian Interests, and the Access to Energy Resources," in Gunther Hauser and Franz Kernic (eds.), *European Security in Transition* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), p.148.

44. Martin Malek, "The South Caucasus at the Crossroads," p.148.

45. Glen E. Howard, "NATO and the Caucasus," p.153, and p.163.

46. Glen E. Howard, "NATO and the Caucasus," p.172. Howard writes that prompted by the US and NATO, Turkey moved on with facilitating the logistical arrangements required for the regional PfP activity in the initial phases of the program. This included, among others, to make travel arrangements for military officers from Turkic speaking republics when they visited NATO headquarters in Brussels to provide help for the selection of prospective PfP candidates (Glen E. Howard, "NATO and the Caucasus," p. 217n).

of military officials from Azerbaijan and Georgia are being educated in Turkey, with impressive results.

A closer look shows that the nature of military ties forged towards NATO integration between Turkey and Azerbaijan stands out compared to those with Georgia. The military cooperation and exchange agreements signed between Turkey and Azerbaijan were seen as creating a sound foundation for Azerbaijan's armed forces.⁴⁷ Viewed from Baku, Turkish military offers the best deterrent for Azerbaijan in the region *vis-à-vis* Armenia in face of the continuing concerns over another possible conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.⁴⁸ On the other hand, Turkey developed military ties with Georgia with bilateral military agreements on the education of military officials and joint military exercises. Turkey's assistance to Georgia for the development of its naval forces, along with the United States and the United Kingdom, has been remarkable. The development of naval force was important for Georgia since the country inherited no vessels from the former Soviet Black Sea fleet.⁴⁹

European Union-wise, the policy objectives for the integration of the Caucasus have been no less demanding. By 2007, the mandate of the European Union Special Representative for South Caucasus included the following:

“(1) to assist Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in carrying out political and economic reforms, notably in the fields of rule of law, democratization, human rights, good governance, development and poverty reduction; (2) in accordance with the existing mechanisms, to prevent conflicts in the region, to contribute to the peaceful settlement of conflicts, including through promoting the return of refugees and internally displaced persons; (3) to engage constructively with main interested actors concerning the region; (4) to encourage and support further cooperation between the states of the region, in particular between the states of the South Caucasus, including on economic, energy and transport issues; and (5) to enhance the effectiveness and visibility of the European Union in the region.”⁵⁰

In view of these policy lines, conflict resolution is the priority of the European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Peter Semneby. The solution for the frozen conflicts of Nagorno-Karabakh as well as the conflicts in Abkhazia and South

47. Glen E. Howard, “NATO and the Caucasus,” pp.173-174.

48. Glen E. Howard, “NATO and the Caucasus,” p.176.

49. Glen E. Howard, “NATO and the Caucasus,” p.185. On the other hand, Armenia's senior patron in NATO proved to be Greece as displayed by Greek efforts to ensure greater participation of Armenia in NATO. As Howard argues, the agreement between Greece and Armenia on sharing intelligence was a concern for Turkey in the second half of the 1990s. For more information regarding Armenia's relations with NATO, see Glen E. Howard, “NATO and the Caucasus,” pp.188-194. See also Rachel Bronson, “NATO's Expanding Presence in the Caucasus and Central Asia,” in Stephen J. Blank (ed.), *NATO After Enlargement*, pp.229-253.

50. Giovanni Grevi, *Pioneering Foreign Policy: The EU Special Representatives—Chaillot Paper*, No.106, October 2007 (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, European Union, 2007), p.53.

Ossetia is indispensable for development and stability according to the European Union. Efforts of the European Union regarding the region include, *inter alia*, monetary donations, technical assistance, humanitarian aid, the Food and Security Program, and the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights. Additionally, the cooperation activities have been determined by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements since 1999. However, conflict settlement has not produced impressive results so far because the European Union assistance has only slightly been conducive to conflict settlement. The main challenge, according to the European Union, is how to move the parties from constantly undermining peace to an environment of mutually strengthening reforms. Between 2005 and 2006, the launching of European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) rule-of-law mission EUJUST *Themis* in Georgia and the inclusion of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia in the new European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) have been impressive.⁵¹ The ENP expanded to include Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia in 2004. However, it should be noted that the individual approaches of these states to the European Union displayed variations. Georgia put special emphasis on conflict resolution. Armenia focuses on regional cooperation while Azerbaijan is less ambitious about the European Union mainly because of more self-confidence stemming from being a hydro-carbon-rich state.⁵² Overall, the regional states seem to be affirmative of the irreversibility of the European Union integration trend, although differences in their approaches do exist.

Turkey is supportive of the European Union integration process of the Caucasian states. However, we can safely argue that the chance for sustainable relations between Europe and the regional states to survive will be shaped by the way the European Union shapes its policies towards Turkey. The argument can be taken further that if the European Union displays ignorance towards the role that can be potentially played by Turkey as a player between Europe and Caucasian (and Central Asian) states, the estimates for developed relations between the European Union and the regional states may not go beyond being mere estimates. The logic is simple here; sound relations between Europe and regional states are likely to be shaped by developed relations between the European Union and Turkey.⁵³

51. Giovanni Grevi, *Pioneering Foreign Policy*, pp.55-57. The major task of EUJUST *Themis* in Georgia was to launch a reform program for Georgian criminal justice system, and it has been successful despite logistic shortcomings.

52. Giovanni Grevi, *Pioneering Foreign Policy*, p.59.

53. See Bülent Aras, *The New Geopolitics of Eurasia and Turkey's Position*, pp.90-93.

COMMON HISTORY

Any analysis of Turkey's policies towards the Balkans and Caucasus cannot overlook the established ties between Turkey and both regions as an integral part of current relations. To Turkey's west, these ties rested on the Ottoman framework introduced to the Balkan peninsula in the Fourteenth Century, reaching its strongest under Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566). By the Seventeenth Century, the Ottoman power would be tested by the Habsburg Empire which forced the Ottoman Empire back to the Danube and the Carpathians.⁵⁴

Administration-wise, all power in the Ottoman Empire was left in the *pashaliks* ruled by the local authorities chosen by the Porte from among the subject peoples of the Empire. The new Ottoman system permitted the Christian subjects to retain their religion under the patriarchal rule in İstanbul.⁵⁵ The Empire was pushed back territorially until the early Twentieth Century and lost what it had gained. The final significant point in Ottoman Empire's Balkan history came along with the Balkan War in 1912-1913. As the Ottoman Empire dwindled, major Balkan lands had already been lost.

The centuries-long common past inevitably left its imprint on a common cultural world. While some of the Muslim-Turkish population in the Balkans immigrated to Turkey in clusters gradually, a certain portion of this population remained in their places. In both ways, they established a cultural bridge between Turkey and the Balkans. During the Soviet times when ties between Turkey and the Muslim-Turkish population of the Balkans remained distant due to being on opposite ideological camps, Turkey showed a renewed interest in reviving the ties after the collapse of the USSR. Both at times of peace and war, Turkey articulated its resolve to protect the Turkish minority in the region, although this was not free from the larger political developments, as in the case of its policies regarding the protection of Turks in Kosovo, which did not come along with optimal results at all times. Also, both during and after the assimilation campaign in late 1980's, Ankara fervently supported the protection of the rights of the Turks of Bulgaria. The fact that the Balkan *émigré* populations in Turkey are influential on shaping policy issues regarding the region suggests that they are likely to remain so in future policies as well.

54. Stevan K. Pawlowitch, *A History of the Balkans, 1804-1945* (London and New York: Addison-Wesley Longman, 1999), p.9.

55. Joseph Slabey Roucek, *Balkan Politics: International Relations in No Man's Land* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1971), p.10. See also Leften Stavros Stavrianos, *Balkan Federation: A History of the Movement Toward Balkan Unity in Modern Times* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1964).

However, this renewed interest towards the region also had its costs for Turkey. Although Ankara was involved in regional affairs and showed interest as much as the other neighboring states did, it ended up facing the extra task of thwarting the arguments which suggested that it wanted to establish a Muslim cultural-political sphere encircling the Orthodox-Slavic group of states in the region. While this argument was more pronounced in the immediate aftermath of the war in Bosnia (1992-1995), it seems to have lost its frequency at present, if it did not totally disappear. Either way, preserving the rights of Turks and ensuring that they live in their respective Balkan countries with a certain degree of integration are observed as two key premises of Turkish policy towards the Balkans today.

To Turkey's east, the ties were established with the entry of the Ottoman rule in the Caucasus. A brief look into the history of Ottoman relations with the region reveals three phases. The first phase is characterized by the conquests of Fatih Sultan Mehmet between 1454 and 1479 as well as those during Bayezid II. The second phase is the Ottoman-Safavid struggle for gaining superiority in the region between 1514 and 1639. The region witnessed the struggle between the Ottoman Empire and Persia for two centuries following the Sixteenth Century. The third phase is characterized starting with the 1700 İstanbul Treaty between the two sides until the Treaty of Adrianople, signed by the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Between the Fifteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, the Ottoman Empire ruled over several provinces and principalities.⁵⁶ The 1829 Treaty of Adrianople ended the 375-year Ottoman rule in the Caucasus, giving Russia the upper hand. The trials and tribulations of World War I did not allow Turkey's presence in that geography. Then, the Cold War set in.

Turkey's Caucasian policy since 1991 reveals at least four elements, the first of which is geographical and economic. The region is Turkey's trade and investment gateway to Central Asia and Russia. The second factor is psychological. In the face of Turkish euphoria stemming from the emotional state of having found lost cousins after long years of isolation, Turkey took an eager interest in restoring ties with Azerbaijan in particular

56. M. Sadık Bilge, *Osmanlı Devleti ve Kafkasya* (İstanbul: Eren, 2005), pp.31-33, and pp.195-223. These were Mingralian Principality, Gürel Principality, Imeret Kingdom, Samtshe Atabeg, Kartli Kingdom, Kakhet Kingdom, Abkhazia Principality, Svanetia Principality. The provinces were Erzincan, Erzurum, Kars, Nogai, Kefe, Georgia/Tbilisi, Kakhet/Kutais, Shirvan, Sohum, Çıldır, Trabzon, Ersh, Derbend, Shemahi, Revan/Revan Nakhchevan, Loru, Tumanis, Gence, Göri, and Ajaria. For a comprehensive account on the history of the Caucasus, see Charles King, *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) and Vicken Cheterian, *War and Peace in the Caucasus: Russia's Troubled Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

with which Turkey had no linguistic barriers, and the other states in general. This came at a time when the European Union was closing its doors on Turkey and its position as a staunch ally in NATO's southeastern flank was being debated in the new post-Cold War conjuncture. Hence, in view of this feeling of isolation, Ankara's self-image of being superior in relation to the weak new-born states was at play in its approach to the region. The third reason was the existence of the Caucasian diaspora (approximately 8 million) in Turkey, who are quite knowledgeable in policy matters and influential. The fourth reason was strategic. In the presence of a weak and dismembered Russia, Turkey had lost the common border with this country, which was a relief for both. The long Cold War perception of Soviet threat, which was too close geographically, had finally come to an end.⁵⁷

Have these trivets gone through a process of change in a way to alter the cultural ties that emerged due to common past? A clear-headed answer would be "no." Perhaps one noteworthy point is that while Turkey feels more comfortable in giving open support to Azerbaijan regarding major foreign policy issues on the agenda of both countries, the maneuver space it has regarding the situation of Abkhazia, for instance, does not seem to be providing it equal ease for an openly supportive rhetoric. The declaration of independence by Abkhazia in 2008 gave way to expectations on the part of the significant Abkhaz diaspora in Turkey that Ankara would follow suit. Turkey has not recognized Abkhazia, which can be ascertained by looking at the larger political picture: as an ally of the West and the United States, and in face of Russian recognition of Abkhazia, it has chosen to emphasize the territorial integrity of Georgia. However, a possible recognition would fulfill the expectations of the North Caucasian immigrants in Turkey and serve for better ties between the Ankara and Sohum.

ENERGY

Any inquiry of Turkey's position *vis-à-vis* its eastern and western neighborhoods entails the inclusion of the increasingly debated issue nowadays—energy. Turkey's role as an energy transit state for both regions is likely to work for Ankara's relevant ambitions and plans, if handled with well-worked out policies. The analysis of how Turkey fits in the energy network of the Balkans brings forth the European Union's energy policies that include the Balkans due to the fact that Balkan energy issues are handled within the larger European Union energy policy network.

57. Baskın Oran, "Türkiye'nin Balkan ve Kafkas Politikası," pp.274-275.

Providing almost half of its energy needs through imports, the European Union is dependent on foreign energy resources and feels compelled to find and secure alternative routes. It is in such a context that it is devising policy strategies to secure the routes that will pass through the Balkans. The major breakthrough in this respect was the signing of Energy Community Treaty in Athens in 2005 which was spearheaded by the European Commission. Effective as of 2006, the treaty represents the largest internal energy market for gas and electricity in the world. It includes the European Union member states, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Kosovo. Turkey, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Norway take part as observers. In legal terms, the signing of the treaty means that the energy *acquis* of the European Union has been adopted by the aforementioned states. The reason why Turkey did not choose to sign the treaty were considerations that certain clauses in the treaty did not satisfy Turkey's policy options and were viewed incompatible with national energy interests. That said, some in the European Union still remains hopeful of a possible future Turkish participation.⁵⁸

Why the Balkans have been treated as part of this treaty and process can be explained also in terms of the lack of individual energy sources in the region and the aspiration of these states to become part of the European Union. The energy sources in the region are quite limited. Although some of Balkan states such as Bulgaria, Macedonia and Romania produce lignite coal, other sources are less common. Only Croatia and Romania have limited production of oil and gas, which is insufficient to meet the demand. There is hydroelectric power generation in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Croatia. The only nuclear power facilities are in Romania and Bulgaria. As a result, the countries are highly dependent on oil and gas imports.⁵⁹

How does Turkey fit in this energy picture? Turkey is likely to become a major energy corridor significantly with the Nabucco gas pipeline, which will carry gas from the Caspian region and Middle East to Austria through Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. The pipeline is planned to be 3,300 km and deliver 25-30 billion cubic meters of natural gas. The second Balkans-bound project in which Turkey is involved is the

58. Ufuk Kantörün, "Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye'nin Enerji Politikaları," 11 March 2010, on http://www.bilgesam.com/tr/index.php?view=article&catid=131%3Aenerji&id=598%3Aavrupa-birlii-ve-tuerkiyenin-enerji-politikalar-&tmpl=component&print=1&layout=default&page=&option=com_content&Itemid=146, as retrieved on 26 March 2010; and Arzu Yorkan, "Avrupa Birliği'nin Enerji Politikası ve Türkiye'ye Etkileri," *Bilge Strateji*, 1/1 (Autumn 2009), p.36.

59. European Commission, Directorate General for Energy and Transport, Memo 05/397: "An Integrated Market for Gas and Electricity Across 34 European Countries? (Brussels, 25 October 2005), on <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/397&language=en>, as retrieved on 26 March 2010.

South Europe Gas Ring project, which is intended to carry gas from the Caspian Sea, the Middle East and southern Mediterranean states to Europe via Turkey. The first pier of the project, Turkey-Greece Interconnector, became operational in 2007, with a planned extension to Italy, to be completed by 2012.

TABLE—Major Pipelines: Central/South Europe⁶⁰

Nabucco Pipeline	From Turkey to Austria via Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary
South Stream Gas Pipeline	From Russia to the Balkans via the Black Sea
AMBO – Trans Balkan Oil Pipeline	From Bulgaria to Albania via Macedonia
TAP – Trans Adriatic Pipeline	Via Greece and Albania to Southern Italy
PEOP – Pan European Oil Pipeline	From Romania to Italy via Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia
Druzhba Pipeline	From Russia to Croatia via one leg through Poland and Germany; the second leg through Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic
Balkan Oil Pipeline	From Bulgaria to Greece

The European Union's Balkan-related energy policies are likely to be compatible with Turkey's energy policies so long as they do not work against Turkey's developing role as a major energy corridor in the evolving energy hub. The Nabucco project epitomizes this process as a zealous enterprise and is affirmative of Turkey's high expectations. In the final analysis, Turkey's energy relations with the Balkans do not work free from the larger European Union energy network. The bottom line is that the energy issue will perhaps be the first-ever policy theme through which Turkey can assert itself in European affairs, including the Balkans, more strongly than ever. But Turkey will have to wait until at least 2015, the expected deadline for the completion of the Nabucco pipeline, to see some initial results.

However, the picture posed by Turkey's energy deals with the Caucasus is more comprehensive and promising. This promising picture burgeoned when it was discussed as an idea during a conversation between Özal and his counterpart former Azerbaijani

60. "Major Energy Pipelines in Central/South Europe", 17 May 2009, *Reuters*, on <http://www.reuters.com/assets/print?aid=USLD62377220090517>, as retrieved on 26 March 2010.

president Abulfəz Elçibay in 1992. The following year, Turkey and Azerbaijan signed a preliminary agreement regarding the construction of a pipeline from Baku to Ceyhan. Although hopes for the agreement to bloom were suspended temporarily after the overthrow of Elçibay in 1993 when former Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Hasan Hasanov stated during an official visit in Ankara that it could be annulled, the agreement remained intact so much so that it became a top foreign policy issue for Turkey afterwards.⁶¹

Another aspect of the Turkish support for the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) had to do with an observable broad-based domestic consensus in Turkey regarding the delivery of oil through Anatolia. There was a remarkable public support and this support survived even after the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi [ANAP]) was replaced by the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi [RP]) and True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi [DYP]) coalition (Refah-Yol) in 1995. Viewed through the West, the BTC project was not just an economic and/or oil delivery project but implied a 'great geopolitical realignment' by Turkey.⁶²

If the energy policy prospects in the second half of the 1990's pointed out an increased role as energy corridor for Turkey concerning Turkish-Azerbaijani relations, this would come along also with the acknowledgment of Georgia as a relatively new partner for Turkey in energy issues. Indeed, Georgia did not appear in a special partnership context before Turkey's policy options at least until 1994. By 1994, it became clear that the only viable transit route for Azeri oil to flow would be Georgia. Why? First, Azerbaijan wanted to secure the oil flow to Turkey by-passing Armenia despite the long distance this implied. Second, the United States would not embrace any oil pipeline project passing through Iran. This consensus culminated in a relevant joint declaration by Turkey and Georgia in 1996. The BTC pipeline is viewed as an economic relief for Georgia in bringing tariff revenues, fostering the country's independence, and reinforcing its pro-Western position in relation to Russia.⁶³

As such, Turkey's energy relationship works in a two-way interaction with the Caucasian states. The keyword with which this energy relationship had been defined

61. Emmanuel Karagiannis, *Energy and Security in the Caucasus* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.155. The Azerbaijani Foreign Minister stated that the pipeline should cross a state that gives support to Azerbaijan in the Karabagh conflict, implying that Turkey was not giving enough support. See also Robert Ebel and Rajan Menon (eds), *Energy and Conflict in Central Asia and the Caucasus* (Oxford and Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000); and Richard M. Auty and Indra de Soysa (eds.), *Energy, Wealth and Governance in the Caucasus and Central Asia: Lessons Not Learned* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

62. Emmanuel Karagiannis, *Energy and Security in the Caucasus*, p.155; the author cites Lowell Bezanis, "The Baku-Ceyhan Pipeline: Constraints to a US Backed Central Asian/Caucasian Exit Route," *Turkish Daily News*, 19 May 1998.

63. Emmanuel Karagiannis, *Energy and Security in the Caucasus*, pp.142-143.

until recently with respect to Turkey was 'transit' or 'corridor' state. Most recently, Turkey has developed a new strategic concept: 'source state.' The official Turkish view is that Turkey wasted much time in the past discussing whether Turkey has oil and gas or not. The new keyword used officially today is 'energy terminal,' implying that Ceyhan is likely to become an energy terminal with its petro-chemical facilities and refineries to host the oil from the Caucasus and elsewhere. This prospective plan aims at making Turkey the center of gravity in energy production and consumption, the impacts of which remain to be seen.⁶⁴

CONCLUDING REMARKS

By the end of the Cold War, Turkey could not avoid the ramifications of the ensuing regionalism currents in its vicinity. In the early 1990's the Turkish response to the Balkans and Caucasus was framed around a relatively new style of active foreign policy making. The regional emphasis on the Balkans and the Caucasus was accentuated with the new policy lines that displayed Turkish-US cooperation, Turkey's support for the regional states' aspiration to become part of Euro-Atlantic structures, the historical ties, and today's increasingly popular policy theme of energy, which are by no means exhaustive or listed in order of importance. Suffice it to say that they were very instrumental in replacing Turkey's former function of insulating with the role of regional player.

Although this process allowed Turkey to boost its position *vis-à-vis* these regions, one thing that should not be overlooked is that it also carried with it the risk of antagonizing Russia. Fortunately, neither in the Balkans nor the Caucasus, which belonged to the Soviet space earlier, did this risk translate itself to an actual condition so much as to constitute a new threat for Turkey's security. Nevertheless, as Turkey began making its way as a player in the region, old hostilities and alliances took to the stage once again in ways with which Turkey was familiar. During the war in Bosnia, Turkey backed the Bosnians. In the larger framework, it had already established a natural alliance relationship with Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia, in addition to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ties have been restored with Romania and Bulgaria, particularly with impressive trade links. The Serbs, on the other hand, were supported by the Greeks and Russians. However, Turkey

64. Hilmi Güler, "Energy Strategies of the Republic of Turkey," in Ahmet Küçükşahin (ed.), *Seeking of Common Resolution For Energy Security: International Symposium, 28-29 April 2009* [translated by Semih Sert and Dilek Çetinkaya] (İstanbul: Harp Akademileri Komutanlığı, Stratejik Araştırmalar Enstitüsü, 2009),

was very careful about keeping diplomatic ties intact with Serbia even at the height of the Bosnian crisis. On the Caucasus front, Turkish-Azerbaijani relationship speaks for itself, while Turkish-Armenian relations are still plagued as if to prove the proverb “history repeats itself,” this time in the Twentyfirst Century. The new Caucasus is a platform where the United States, Turkish, Azerbaijani and Georgian alliance is observed as a driving force mainly on energy issues.

Whether Turkey’s new position *vis-à-vis* both regions was brought to pass as a mere back-up of United States policies for the sake of fulfilling its task as a United States ally or whether it came through as a well-worked out and planned sovereign agenda is indicative of the existence of both considerations. Today, there is no dispute that this new player role is not just a self-image of Turkey concerning the regions; it is also approved by the regional states and it has displayed no interruptions so far since 1990. Given that times of actual war have been eliminated already in both regions; prospects for further economic, civilian, social, educational developmental dynamics should outweigh possible conflictual dynamics. In this context, the most serious challenge can be a renewed conflict of over Nagorno-Karabakh in the Caucasus, while it may be a severed deadlock in the governing structure of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Balkans—which is giving its first signals. In both possible conflict scenarios, Turkey’s role would inevitably be put through a test. As its current role is not likely to be reversed in the short- and medium-term, the level of efficacy that Turkey displays in responding to these challenges is likely to be one which is compatible with common expectations.

